

**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF BLOOMINGTON**  
**COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY**

Tuesday, February 9, 2016

6:00 pm McCloskey Room, City Hall, 401 North Morton Street

Jana called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

**Present:** Gwen White, Jana McGee, Molly O'Donnell, Teddie Mower, Dave Rollo, Gary Charbonneau, Jessica Pittman

**Regrets:** Bill Brown, Rebecca Swanson, Jeff Jewel

**Staff:** Jacqui Bauer, Linda Williamson

**Public Comment:** No public comment

**Presentation by Rachel Atz: water quality in Bloomington**

Rachel described the basic water treatment process at the Monroe Water Treatment Plant.

- Residuals and backwash filtration water both sent out of the process rather than recycled to the head of the plant, which is now considered best practice.
- 420 miles of water pipe, 11 booster/pumps, 8 storage tanks, 3,070 hydrants, 17 sampling stations, 2 wastewater plants.
- Storage tanks help regulate water pressure and also help the utility address high-demand times of day. The stored water can also be used during times of emergency.
- Water testing: 8 categories regulated by the Safe Drinking Water Act. Recently focusing increased attention to algal blooms and their resulting toxins.
  - Test at 17 sampling locations plus 6 storage tanks
  - Student intern program is key for carrying out water testing.
  - Some in-line testing locations sample water quality every 15 minutes
  - Safe Drinking Water Act requires Consumer Confidence Report (aka the Water Quality Report)

Our water utility has been in the news recently because of increasing levels of disinfectant byproducts (DBPs). We have not violated drinking water standards, but the trend is a concern. DBPs are the result of organic material coming into contact with the chlorine that is added to the water. Time and temperature have a big impact on the levels.

Some byproducts have been identified as causing cancer and other health concerns; vulnerable populations (like children and the elderly) may be more susceptible to these effects. In Bloomington, the DBPs of primary concern are Total Trihalomethanes and

Haloacetic Acids. We have not exceeded the maximum contaminant level based on the required testing process, but there have been instantaneous samples that have exceeded the recommended levels.

To address this, the Utilities Board will have Black & Veatch perform an optimization study at the water plant, hire the Lochmueller Group for additional oversight, require operators to undergo new training and increase sampling, and improve and increase the flushing program.

Data and ongoing updates on this issue can be found at <http://bloomington.in.gov/data>.

TTHMs are easiest to remove through carbon filters. Info on what is filterable with different filters is included on the back of the boxes – some of the more basic filters do not filter TTHMs, but the more advanced versions do. They may not remove the substances completely, but will reduce them.

When the weather is cold and the level of organics in the lake is low, DBPs are less of a problem.

We have used chloramines for disinfection since 1987. We switch to using chlorine for a period of weeks each year in order to clear free ammonia (a component of chloramines) out of the distribution system.

The increasing levels of DBPs is due to our treatment strategy; however, when compared with other communities, our source water is much higher quality. She hopes to collect better data to show how the reservoir is changing over time. At this time, she doesn't have adequate data to evaluate this.

Dave noted that the Army Corps is working on their management plan for Lake Monroe, and that it is incumbent on us to provide input to make sure the plan is adequate. The new plan does not address water quality, but is focused on recreation needs.

How much of the distribution system is composed of lead pipes? The city complies with EPA's Lead & Copper Rule, and has also conducted research in older neighborhoods to determine the extent of possible concerns. There is good data on water mains, but little information about the line to the meter, the line from the meter to the house, and about the plumbing inside the house. They have had trouble recruiting participants for this project, but given the issues in Flint they may find more interest in the future.

Residents can request free testing by calling Rachel at 812.349.3655 or email [wq@bloomington.in.gov](mailto:wq@bloomington.in.gov).

**Announcements:**

Green Drinks will be on January 27 and will include a sustainability visioning effort.

The Terrible Horrible Bike Ride will be on February 13. There will also be a Clean Power Plan public forum at 6pm on February 15, and Local First Bloomington will host PowerPoint Roulette will be on February 17.

Two bills could affect solid waste districts and their HB 88 and SB366

ICEY and the MCEC will host a weatherization event on Valentine's Day – they still need homes to weatherize.

The City Council will consider a resolution on March 2 opposing the TransPacific Partnership because of its anticipated negative impacts on the environment and local sovereignty (since certain local actions could be perceived as trade barriers).

The Council has also drafted a letter opposing HB 1053 to encourage our representatives to oppose it.

**Approval of Minutes:** The January 2016 minutes were approved.

**Presentation by Gwen White on Sustainability Reporting Options (Part 2)**

The Global Reporting Initiative encourages organizations to report their most critical impacts. GRI rates corporations, but not cities (although cities can report). Includes General Standards Disclosures ("Who we are") and Specific Standards Disclosures ("What we do").

GRI provides list of possible categories that organizations can choose to report on.

Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) and GRI overlap, and have created chart showing which metrics overlap with which.

Do all GRI participating entities use the same units of measurement? There are recommendations, but not firm guidelines.

Gwen will be doing a GRI training in March in Washington DC, and will also sit in on a CDP training at the same time.

**Report from the Chair**

Jeff Jewel has accepted a job in another city, and we need a new co-chair. Please let Jana or Jacqui know if you're interested.

**Report from the Sustainability Coordinator:**

Update on City website – focus on this at a future meeting.

MCEC has launched its Workplace Partner Program and is seeking employers and organizations to participate in the program.

**Committee reports and updates**

1. Environmental Commission Planning Committee: No report.
2. Environmental Commission: No meeting in January.
3. Bring Your Bag Bloomington update: HB 1053 proposes to remove the ability of local governments to regulate packaging by amending the home rule statute. The committee is seeking assistance in opposing passage of this bill. The bill has passed the house and will be considered in the senate on Thursday.

New Business: No new business.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45.

Next Meeting: March 8<sup>th</sup>, McCloskey Room, City Hall at 6:00 p.m.